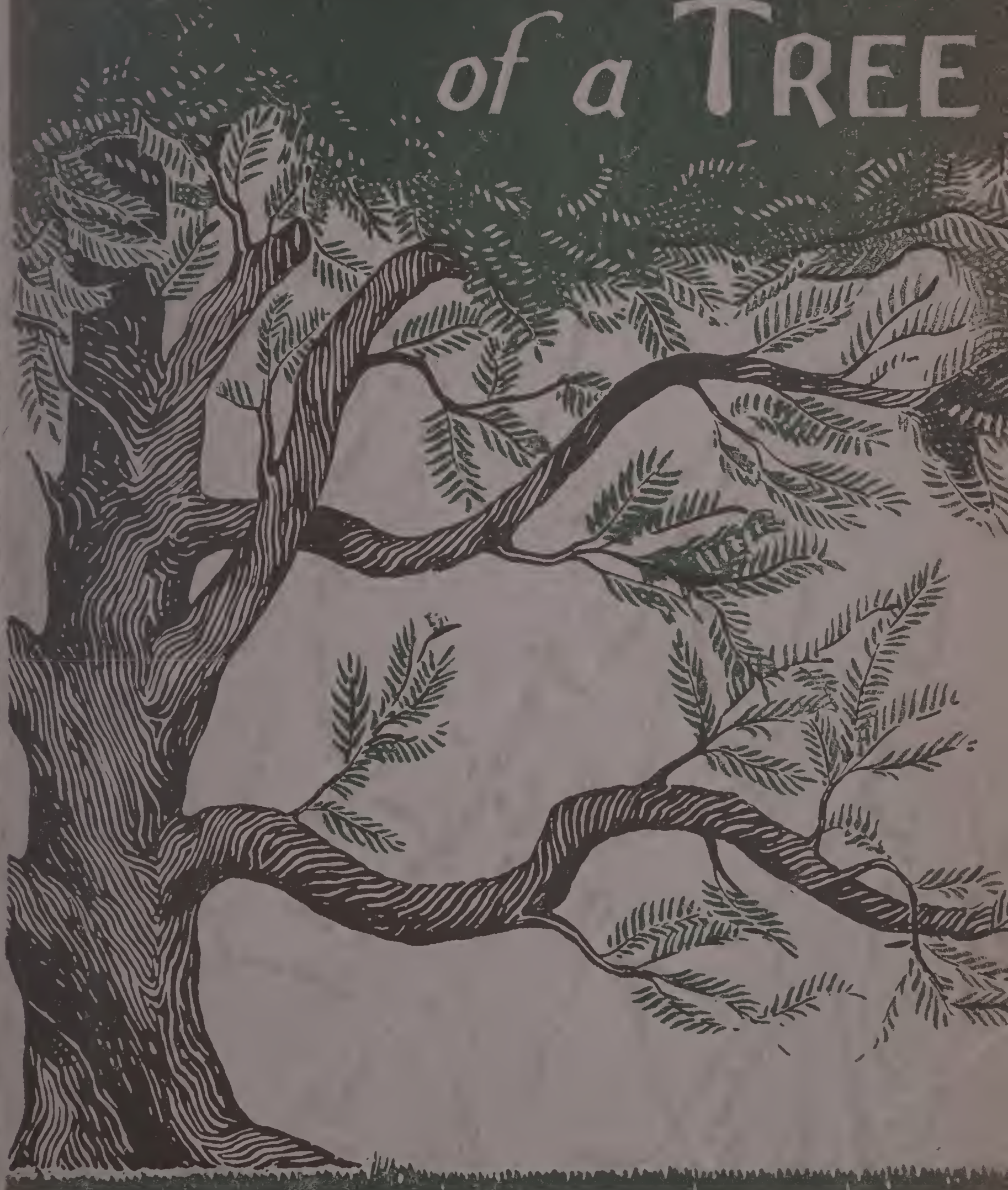


The
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
of a **TREE**



MARY O. SMITH



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Autobiography of a Tree

The Autobiography of a Tree

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MARY O. SMITH

B. J. BRIMMER COMPANY
Boston, Massachusetts



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BOSTON, MASS.

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Copyright Office
JUN 16 '23

Printed in United States of America
Press of GOODMAN BROTHERS, INCORPORATED
Boston, Mass.

NOV 24 '23

He “lived the life.” I am still striving to know.

. . . “ *Natural things*
And spiritual; who separates those two
In art, in morals, or the social drift,
Tears up the bond of nature and brings death.
Paints futile pictures, writes unreal verse,
Leads vulgar days, deals ignorantly with men,
Is wrong, in short, at all points.”

“ *Aurora Leigh* ”
Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

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BY
MARY O. SMITH

*“ . . . In the midst of the street of it and
on either side of the river, was there the
Tree of Life. . . .*

*And the leaves of the tree were for the
healing of the nations.”*

Revelations, xxii, 11.



DURING what seemed to be my first awakening was a sense of power; a force within me that was a part of and yet not I; a something that urged me to push up and out into what, I did not know. Whatever its nature it moved me and I began my upward way.

The dark earth above and around me gave room to it.

The insect life I encountered made way for me.

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Obstacles I could not move I went around.

Then came a time when that within which I could not then name shook the roots of my being into active conscious life. That something within which I have since learned to know as God, and through this present awareness to recognize its power as love — the rhythm of all vibratory action. As this newly-awakened thought impressed itself upon me, I became aware of a coming nearness of something vast, unknown and yet awaiting me. I resisted the push within, fearful of what might be beyond. But the powerful inherent force that I felt had always been with me kept up the onward move and assured me, how I do not know, that just above me, outside the crust that seemingly held me as a prisoner, I should find a wonderful, dazzling glory. A something, the opposite from this close and stifling darkness, that had, so far as I know, been the limit of my desires.

But at this stage of my upward journey new emotions were awakening. I felt that back of my desires were motives as well as a will to do.

This something within, a part of and yet not I, impressed me with its reality. I learned that every effort I put forth was encouraged and assisted by this Intelligence which was greater than my own. I learned to move in harmony with it, that my will,

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my individual power might be governed by this Greater Will. For to the extent I recognized and co-operated with it, to that extent I gained assurance, strength of purpose, courage and volition.

The day came when I burst forth and looked upon a new heaven and a new earth.

Behind, and buried beneath the earth's crust, was that part of my physical instrument which I felt but could not see. For my roots were hidden. But that of me which had been seeking was out in this new world of vibrating color which I since have learned to know as light. How long I had been hidden from it I did not know. Nor do I now.

As a separate thing, yet one with all, did I breathe and sense my being. Close beside me were others which I felt were of my kind — tall, majestic and strong. Their branches spread out thick and far. Beautiful, tiny bits which I have learned since to know as leaves, waved by the breezes. Fine in texture and color, they moved to and fro as if played upon by some hand, some presence unknown to me. A great longing came upon me to reach heights, beauty and grandeur like these.

As I looked wonderingly upon all this mystery of form and beauty, a soft, golden light grew and enveloped everything in its gorgeous rays. The expanse above me began to glow with new wonders.

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Soon a sense of warmth filled me. I turned toward this new, unknown influence to behold for the first time the glories of the dawn. As the great orb of light rose higher and higher above me, I felt a greater impulse to rise, reach up into the vast unknown distance that embraced yet lured me on. Though my vision of earth's sights at that time was limited, yet the heavens and their marvelous beauties were ever open to my gaze. For this I thanked the Great Something I felt pulsing within and around me.

As I grew in understanding, I learned that all sustaining strength came from this Great Source, be it above, outside, or within me.

As I continued in my physical growth, my outer viewpoint changed. New and more wonderful things came within my sight. It was a happy day for me when I had lifted myself to a height where I could see the brook that had been singing to me ever since my advent into this ever new abiding place of beauty. Such songs as it sang! I learned its every note. I knew, as if in no other way, by its soft and tender harmonies, that Nature's elements were, to all outward appearances, sleeping. For when awake, stirred by strong winds and downpours of rain, the brook responded by its rapid movements as of many waters. Where did it come

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from and whence was it going? What was its mission in this universe of activity and change? It had its use, of this I was sure. But what, I did not know.

As I grew stronger, the birds came and made their homes under my sheltering leaves. How their home life thrilled and touched me! Filled me with a knowledge of a life higher than mine. Filled me with a broader, keener, more comprehensive understanding of that which I learned to know as God. That Great, Inherent Animating Principle that was, through my willingness to accept, mine to co-operate with — thereby molding and bringing me into the true understanding of my spiritual being. I sensed that this Great Presence was larger than I, yet it seemed to be the Motive Power within, and a part of this individual animating something I called myself. Just how that could consistently be I did not then know, nor do I now. But I felt it ever within and around me. I sensed that without it the real Me would not be. Because of this I attuned my voice to mingle with all the voices of the forest. With the breezes that played about me and the more refined, unseen forces that I felt but could not see,—in songs of thanksgiving and love to the Great Architect of my being.

As the seasons came and went, I felt that each

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made manifest to me, through my experiences, the ever-increasing knowledge of the unity of all.

The beauty and wonder of Me, the bud and the blossom, were ever new.

Always did I feel companioned. I could not see the presence, yet my whole being seemed responsive to another of my kind, and needful for my development.

Nothing obstructed my outward growth, my symmetry. I prided myself on my beauty of form, until one never-to-be-forgotten day when every Tree became heavily laden with ice and snow, and one of my branches bent beneath its burden. Days went by, but the sun's rays did not reach and relieve me until at last, when the ice turned into water, I thought its dripping to be my own tears of self-pity; for I found my twisted limb still bent and out of shape. How I tried to bring it back into its old line of beauty! But I could not. Later I was glad of that which I — for lack of understanding — called ugly.

One day when Spring's awakening began to stir within me and all living things showed evidence of God's love in the outward renewal of life, His presence within made known to me the approach of a new, a higher rating of intelligence before unknown to me. I felt its coming.

It was nearing the close of a beautiful day. Other growing things near me must have also sensed it, for everything within my view seemed to take on an air of expectancy; a holding of one's breath, as it were, for some new arrival in our midst. My whole being seemed to quiver with an unknown delight. Many of my buds, which were nearly opened, broke forth into tiny leaves to wave a welcome. I bent myself to listen and see what this new and vibrant aspect of life nearing me was like.

Upright on two feet and arms encircling each other, came two radiant beings. Instinctively, or, I might say, by a spiritual perception, I knew them to be of a much higher degree and quality of being than I, or the animal life around me. That they were nearer a completed demonstration of indi-

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vidual life as the results of a more advanced, intelligent co-operation with the Great Constructive Principle of all life made manifest in the different forms and expression of Love. Love so glorified in these two made one by it that I bowed my head in prayer and praise to the Great Source of all life.

I have looked squarely into the face of the sun in its noontime passing without a faltering in my gaze. I have rejoiced in its light. I have felt its warmth and sensed my great need of all it had to give. I have been made to realize that life, as we know it here on this so-called physical plane, would cease to be active, ever expressing without its presence. When its mission by day is finished and I have watched it sink below my gaze, I have wondered upon the wonder of it all! The warmth and light of the sun by day and the beauty and light of the moon at night. The twinkling little bits of golden lights that peeped to me from the vast vault of deep blue above, or beneath clouds of silver, were my comrades by night. All of these glowed with wondrous beauty and light. But they paled before the radiance of the upturned faces of the two beings who were now so near. They shone with a light that I have since learned is not "seen on land or sea." These beings were lighted by that something which I, too, have felt, but until now never fully

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understood. It was Love. Love that is God. Love the Great Universal Intelligence. Love manifested in His children, made in His likeness and image, through their willing endeavor to reflect Him.

The fairer and slighter of the two — the man's mate — came and touched me. Touched me with hands as delicate and white as the blossoms that fell from the hawthorn bush beside me.

"Dear, come here," I sensed her saying. "Is this not a beautiful tree? A willow, dear, just like those near my old home so far away. How do you suppose it came to be growing here among all these other trees, so unlike it? Do you think we could take it up very, very carefully and set it near our home? "

"Certainly, Beloved," he answered in tones that were deeper yet filled with sweetness. "I am sure it would live. This little brook that is singing its way onward to the sea is the very same that runs through the end of our garden."

"How beautiful!" she exclaimed. "They will still be near friends. I am glad of that. I would not care to separate them. Oh, Love!" she cried, "how wonderfully good God and His many blessings are! I have so wanted a willow tree just like this. See what shape and size these branches will become as the tree develops. This variety or species

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are real house-builders. The one at my home was a playhouse all through my childhood days. The broad seats in its branches were my resting places. I would weave patterns of beauty with its slender pointed leaves and make chains of its tasseled blossoms. Many a sweet dream of what the future might bring to me was woven into them. And always in those dreams was the willow and its whispering songs of love; and now here it is a reality. A real, living willow for us to enjoy and make a part of our very lives."

Putting her sweet face onto the smooth greenish brown of my body, she took me into her heart and life forever. I felt that with this — her very anointment of love — I had in truth become one with them. Even my poor twisted limb was admired and petted, and with her arms around me she assured me that they would come again soon and take me home.

As they turned to leave me the sun sank out of my sight on this, the most remarkable day of my life. The loving contact of these two beings had opened a channel of thought of deeper import than ever before. It brought to me a clearer and broader understanding of that at-one-ment of all life that I had come to know in all its phases around and above me. I was shown how my willingness to heed

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the call that came to me and urged me up and out of the dark earth into this world of varied beauty and peopled with beings of higher degree and qualities of intelligence far beyond my comprehension, had worked for my good. It did not cease then, even in my lesser consciousness, for in my awareness of this, which they called a tree, was a sense of ever upward movement, greater understanding into what, and for what I did not at that time know.

I discovered that growing things around me grew and blossomed and disappeared. Why this coming and why this going I could not determine. I watched the birds in their nesting time. I have done my part to shield the little ones from storm and wind. I have watched them during their many stages of growth. I have seen them grow strong and fly away. But I have also known some that did not go. Some peeped their tiny lives away for want of care. Why was this? And for what? These and many more questions I would ask, but got no reply. I would hide their little half-grown bodies with my leaves, yet feeling within myself that their unsung songs were yet living and gaining in melody just beyond my sense of earthly hearing — that sometime, somewhere, they would welcome me. Such as these and many other manifestations or changes about me led me not only to hope, to believe, to

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have faith, but also intuitively to feel that all was life. That "There is no death! There are no dead." That this Great Impulse within me, this upward and outward push from within had always been and always would be. I found, as time went on, that it was my first great duty, my compensation to this Guiding, Governing Principle, to work with it. To come so into harmony with it as to better understand the established facts of life about me. Only in this way could I determine such truths as make one free. That to bring my earthly life into harmony with the spiritual, I must make right use of the life as it now manifests itself in me. Use my own resources to bless others; and through right giving, receive righteousness, and thereby maintain my established harmonic relation with the Source through which I came.

As revealed by my light of truth, all this was a foreshadowing of a great truth. That all life depended upon Giving and Receiving. When I realized this for the first time, that I, just a tree, was receiving constantly, not only today but every moment, I felt a sense of obligation, never before brought to me. Not until then had my knowledge been sufficient to reveal that the "very foundations at the root of all truth is God — Consciousness." From that time on I was conscious, up to my degree

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and quality of understanding, that I was a constant receiver of many blessings necessary for my advancement. That it was up to me to use well my gifts that I might in this right way gradually unfold and so sense with a clearer vision the Great Source of my being, and to give thanks, not only with bowed head and songs of praise, but influenced by the right motives and desires. Give! Give! Give!

It was in this spirit that I faced the ordeal of my removal. I must admit there were moments of real fear. Fear and dread of this taking up of the very roots of my being. But I recalled that first tiny impulse to push up and out into the light of day. Had I not then glimpsed this great pulsing from within me and worked with it; if I had not been at that time a willing giver as well as a willing receiver, I never should have found the earth's crust and broken through into this larger and more radiant phase of life. Should I hold back now when greater vistas were about to open for me? No! I would willingly do my part. I would loosen my hold on the dear mother earth that helped to nourish me. I would not faint in my well-doing. I would cooperate with all the strength of my nature with this Greater Intelligence in whom I felt I lived, moved and had my being.

In this attitude of thought I prepared myself for the change about to come. It was not an easy task — this readjustment I was anticipating. But I had a feeling that sometime, far back of my present, I

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had failed at just such a turn in my affairs. If so, I would not again be a self-inflicted victim — one who failed to hear the voice and have the vision. And because of this, and more recent experiences in my development, I fought as never before to keep my being poised and my intuitions awake to effects as well as causes.

The morning that proved to be the day of my removal opened with a gentle downpour of rain. I received it as a baptismal blessing. I sensed a need of this cleansing and sustaining water. I did not at that time know that it was this event that was necessary for my safe uptaking. Later in the day, at the time when the sun was about to leave and only its shadows lingered, I heard again the sweet voice of my lady. He, her mate, had called her by a name I felt sure was his alone to use. As they approached, I saw another of their kind with them. He carried in his hand what I have since learned to know as a spade. Even then I recognized it as the means of my uprooting.

As they drew near, the man clasped my trunk with both hands and shook me as if to determine my hold on the mass of material that covered my roots from sight. He turned to my lady and said: "It is wonderful that a tree of this size seems to have so slight a hold on the earth. It responds to

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my effort exactly as one does whose roots have been partly released from the ground that holds them.”

If they could have understood me I would have told them that that was just what had occurred. For had I not, through my co-operation with the Principle of all growth and development, prepared the way for my own uptaking?

More and more at every stage of my own development did I sense an established harmonic relation between all there is, and that from which all came. That to become, to be *some* thing, was not to seek for or expect to find it in *no* thing. I did not then know, nor do I now, just what the essence or the real was out of which I became this, that is called a tree. But I have always realized a pulsing, vibrant, living force. Something that always must have been in the past, because it is now of the present and I judged always would be. At this point in my reminiscing my lady turned to her mate and said: “Dearest, this coming out of the dark tomb of the earth is the tree’s resurrection.”

Loving her as I did, I was sorry I was not able to make her understand that all moments of my life were those of forthcoming. A reaching out and up and into newer experiences, even additional heights of understanding. That the real of me never

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sleeps. That every moment was a new awakening. That life could not be buried. But ever active, ever vibrant Life. That earth could not hide, nor fire burn, nor water quench it. That the Great Animating Principle is always ready to act harmoniously in my kingdom of vegetation and the one beneath me and naturally the two above. But I had yet to learn that those who represent the highest kingdom in this material universe — like my lady and others of her kind — had free choice.

I sensed that all life and intelligence must be spiritual. Though I could not see it, I faintly realized that when, through right personal effort, all forms of life reached that state or condition wherein they perceived they were in reality spiritual and not physical, they would then know that as such they always had been and always would be enduring, eternal, and everlasting life.

That all stages of individual spiritual unfoldment depended upon co-operation with the Great Universal Mind. I learned that in the kingdom of the human family such are endowed with independent, self-conscious and rational volition wherewith to make free choice through free will. I learned that these can, if they so desire, “ know every established relation which the facts of nature sustain to each other ” and to the seekers after Truth.

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In each of the four kingdoms it is individual work based upon individual consciousness — the foundation of all knowledge working in harmony with God Consciousness. Only in this right way can each and all recognize, up to their degree and quality of understanding, “That it is the Spirit that quickeneth.” I learned that here on this material plane every phase of life is represented in its own natural kingdom. Therefore, in their own way, it is the duty and privilege of all to “ask and ye shall receive.” “Knock and it shall be opened unto you.” “Seek and ye shall find.” Do and ye shall become. Become what? Truth, the verity of all things. Truth that opens the door to Wisdom. Enduring Truth that is revealed through right seeking. Truth that determines the earned increment, through personal effort of every seeker for Wisdom. Truth such as this world would reveal through Asking, Receiving and Giving in “the spirit of love” — the Great Principle through which we must work if we would reach the highest expression of Divine love each in his place is capable of obtaining.

Later on it was given me to know that it was an obligation, a duty, of everything — whatever kingdom it is working in — to make the best of its opportunities through its demonstration here, the results of which determine the way to the more

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radiant Light of Truth. I believed it then, and I do now, that when sentient beings make the change through the Great Law of Attraction, into "the home (their place) not made by hands, eternal in the heaven," the earthly door in the school of expression is closed forever. Many will not accept such statement as "leaves of healing."

By this time my lady's mate and the man had lifted me from my abiding place. I gazed into the opening that had once held and supported me. But there I found no answer to my many questions. I saw no tangible thing that could help me to better understand that unseeing, unceasing push within me. Very gently they carried me forth.

With my many branches I touched my old comrades a loving goodbye. I knew I was leaving them never to return. Just what I might have left behind to spring up in the place where I once stood I did not know. All that was to me unknown. I felt grateful for the past. I was willing to leave it and move onward into the future, fitted, I was sure, with sufficient lessons necessary to the advancement I would find among those of a higher kingdom than the one in which I was placed, to do my work in revealing the true God-created universe.

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After binding together my many roots and the damp earth that clung to them, they placed me in a machine that moved by a strength I knew nothing about. Yet I wondered if it was a part of that something that throbbed in me; that which pushed me on? I knew it was some tremendous force, for we moved onward with such great speed that the forest, with its myriad dear familiar sights and sounds, was left behind. My head rested upon the lap of my lady. Her dear presence stilled the fearful beating of my heart and helped me to forget my lowly position. I felt sure my head again would rear itself upward and my branches resume their natural lines.

It was such a strange journey, this of mine to my new home. I looked with wonder and amazement at the new sights appearing to me from all sides. In the woods from which I came I had seen little four-footed creatures seemingly just attending to their own desires and wants. I loved them and I am sure they loved me. But here were huge animals constantly being forced to pull along heavy burdens. I did not like these sights. They seemed out of tune with the freedom of the life I had known. Over our heads flew a big, dark object. It went through the air like some winged bird. But it sang no song that lulled and brought me happiness like

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those of the birds of the forest. It gave forth sounds that caused unrest in every fibre of my being. I ceased to open my sense of sight or sound. And drawing my branches closer about me I settled back, soothed with the old assurance that all was well.

Not long after this we came to a stop. I heard a few spoken words, and then I was lifted up and out to the ground. My roots were unloosed and placed within an opening ready to receive them. How good the dear earth felt to me as it was carefully placed around my roots. How good it was to again take an upward stand. To feel myself again reaching up and out into something that seemed to be waiting for and expecting me. By whatever name this seeming emptiness might in reality be, it took me into its arms and I became another object by which man might determine distance in this seeming void of unlimited space.

It was my lady who said: "Turn it a little more this way, please. I want this branch next the house."

She had her hand upon my twisted limb. The limb I had been unable to bring into shape. The limb, as I thought, spoiled my beauty.

Very carefully the man did as she requested, and as the soil advanced higher up on my trunk he

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pressed it firmly down. "There," he said. "By tomorrow that tree won't know it has ever been moved."

This statement amused me. There was much I could have told them. But their ears were deaf to my calls. Deaf to the desires and knowledge I so much wished to convey to them. This puzzled me much. For I knew they could see and feel me. I knew they understood certain facts about me. But when I tried to convey the knowledge I possessed to them they were uncommunicative, unresponsive. I, a tree, so very much below them in understanding, yet sensed every word they uttered, but how, I did not know. I caught the meaning of the sounds as I did the songs of the birds and the playing of the breezes among my branches and leaves. They came, so it seemed to me, by different rates of vibrations. Each tone rated with its own meaning. I recalled that terrible night of tragedy when the trees of the forest broke and fell around me. Long before its force hurled itself upon me I felt that some unknown calamity was near. I caught the sounds of disaster by the feel of the winds upon me. Fiercer and fiercer they beat me. A sense of great peril filled me with fear. I felt as though I must hold taut every thread of my being — that only in this way could I withstand the ferocity of their power.

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But I soon learned that was not the way to meet them.

I learned I must co-operate, come into harmony with their moods or break under their much stronger grasp. So I let myself go. I became a willing partner in the big game (or play) the elements were manifesting. I turned and twisted and bent and bowed to their seeming sovereign law. By so doing my limbs remained unbroken.

This experience taught me the great lesson of tactfulness. That the willingness to do is the important factor in the law of adjustment — that of becoming.

After the fury of the storm was over, I realized as never before the necessity for controlling and adapting my own physical forces to those of others if I would better understand the great existing spiritual laws in and about me: Whence came all these events, and for what? I had at that time but a slight awakening.

After years of effort and experience the vastness of that which is known as God, Love, Life, Truth, Universal Intelligence, Constructive Principle of nature, the Great Architect of being, and many other names remained still but faintly understood. I sensed an abiding love, and the activity of all being. I was learning that if I, in time, came to know the whole truth embodied in this First Great Cause I

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should be free from all darkness, all ignorance. That only through my own right efforts, my own right experiences, would the light of truth increase my ever-unfolding spiritual understanding.

In the stillness and beauty of these awakened thoughts the new strange sounds and even the presence of my lady were apparently lost to my consciousness.

The shaking of my body brought me back to my outer surroundings. "There," continued the man, "it is as solid as I can make it. You can't hurt or kill a willow. A branch put into the ground at any time or any angle is sure to sprout."

I was glad to hear his assurance of this fact to my lady. He was possessed of the ability to transfer his knowledge, which I could not do. But I felt sure that in time, by close companionship with her, she would learn to better understand me and my language.

The man who had, as he called it, "planted me," left, leaving me alone with the two.

"My Love," said my lady, turning to her mate, "I wonder if you realize just how happy the coming of this tree has made me. It is like the arrival of some dear one whose absence has caused me pain. Always from a child I have loved trees. Flowers are beautiful, and I love them, but not as I do the trees. They seem to possess such a deep, hidden meaning

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in every stage of their upward climb. Do they seem that way to you? ”

“ No, Dear,” he answered. “ I fear I have just accepted them, never thinking of their inner life, its meaning and the part they fill in rounding out the Plan and Purpose of all life as demonstrated by them through their co-operation with the Great Giver of all gifts — His many and various gifts that make lives so rich and full.”

“ I am afraid, Dear,” he continued, “ I have given more thought to the so-called creative power of man, and have overlooked many of the established facts of nature.’

“ And so failed to always determine the truth?” she softly questioned.

“ Yes, until I found you, Darling.”

They turned and left me. Left me to dwell upon the meaning of what they said.

Like an illumination of light where before had been darkness, I knew this something within, this upward push of my very being, was this Great Giver of all gifts. I knew that God was the Creative Power of all forms of life. I knew, or felt I did, what the man had yet to learn. That neither he, nor I, nor anything, could create. That he and I and all were just demonstrators of the Great Law. That the spiritual substance out of which men shaped their thoughts, desires and the forms they visioned, were all in the beginning. That if we would grow into greater knowledge, greater beauty, and greater use, we must recognize and so know this truth, through our co-operation with this one Creator and His eternal laws; and so learn that in principle they are constructive, never failing in compensatory justice. Never ending, never dying, but God-created life. Life in the beginning and Life forever.

I learned that I was as essential in my place in the kingdom of vegetation as the stone in its mineral kingdom beneath, or the animal above in its

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own kind; and that of man in his kingdom of self-consciousness of God, self and other selves.

What a light of truth all this revealed to me. For the first time I realized there was no limit, up to my degree and quality of understanding, of what I could achieve, providing I retained, through my own right motives, desires and acts, my established place in God's created universe. That because of this Great Creative Source, of which I was a part, I was in reality enduring, eternal, and everlasting.

This great fact humbled all self pride and all self pity. This truth alone proved to be the open door into a clearer, broader outlook toward more knowledge. It proved to be the open door to wisdom. All this gave me courage to face the conditions near and about me. Yet sounds new to my sense of hearing poured their weight of inharmony upon me. I tried to shrink from them, but I could not. How different from the various sounds of the forest. These lacked serenity, that peace found in the music of the trees and the soft and homey calls of the drowsy birds. I believe every note sounded on the key-board of nature is heard in the heart of the woods. I called it the great organ of the universe. At times the blowing of the winds among and upon the tree's branches must, I thought, be like the beating of many waters on the face of some mighty rock. But such as these did not sicken me

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like the sounds which now filled me with dismay. These hurt me as nothing else ever did. A feeling new and almost overpowering came upon me. I asked myself: "How could I evade them? How could I escape them?" And then, in answer to my call, the truth that I determined for myself during that terrible tragedy of the winds, came as a benediction to my troubled being. For it came to remind me that what I *had* done I could do again. That I must accept these conditions. I must adjust myself to them. I must prove my spiritual strength by my unresistance to the physical. That I was responsible for every truth I had made my own. That in very truth I could not relinquish one truth in my search for others. For through my own efforts, my own experiences, each had become a part of my very being. This assurance gave me my first great incentive, a goal to work for and toward. Its meaning I was aware of even then, but I did not name it until years hence.

Just then the whole world within my view sprang into light. The space outside our low wall was one vast expanse of brilliancy. I knew the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars. But this was new to me. What power pushed it up and out into the world of night, I asked? But no answer came. Yet through and within my inmost being was the constant throbbing of life. The gift of the Great Giver

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of life's gifts, by and through which all answers came. Yes, they never failed to come when in the right attitude of spirit I asked, sought and knocked at the only door that opened into the Light of Truth. The door of Wisdom. The door of spiritual experience that opens "Into the City not built by hands, eternal in the heavens," "Wherein a pure river of the water of life, clear as a crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river was there the tree of life. . . . And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

"Happy is the man that findeth Wisdom, and the man who getteth understanding. For the fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life."

Am not I, a tree on this side of the river of life, gaining, through right efforts, such truths as will enable me, when I have thrown aside this physical instrument, to obtain greater and still greater truths into the light of Wisdom — the reality of all life? And again the eternal, renewing life-throb within the heart of me answered, Yes. "Behold, I make all things new." And "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life."

This assurance filled me with a sense that surpassed even the rest that was found in the midst of

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the woods. A peace that overcame and shut out the lights and sounds here in this abode of men.

I had eyes to see, but I saw not. Ears to hear, but I heard not. For finer and more acute spiritual senses dominated my whole being, and I found that these were mine to better understand. Mine to use. Could I do this? Of that I was not at that time sure. Yet they seemed to belong to that part of me that always had been and always would be. That something within which never makes any mistakes filled me with this knowledge. Never before had Absolute Justice so impressed me with its verity as now. Never once through my different experiences, which alone determine one's growth and unfoldment, had Justice ceased to manifest, how and in what form I alone was responsible. I could have spent this, my first night here in my new home, in a destructive manner, but if so, again, Justice would have meted out to me my earned increment, the like of which would have obscured the glory of the morning. Through humility, the door to wisdom, I found the rest that comes through peace, and with it the physical strength that I needed for my readjustment. I threw all the force of my being into the roots of me. I spread them out and down and up. I made them clasp the earth that lay about them; made them take hold of the things present. I wanted to feel that I was truly

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“planted.” I seemed to sense as never before that I had an important work to do here on this side of the river of life. That the demonstrations must be made by me through the body, my physical instrument which was likened unto a tree. Made that I might learn that the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Had not I to *do*, in order to become like the Great Giver? And was not I, up to my degree and quality of intelligence, responsible that my mission be fulfilled? And did not all this depend upon my willing co-operation with the Great Source from whence I came if I would receive, and give such spiritual and compensatory values as would flow from Absolute Justice? From Eternal Justice, which never sleepeth, never ceases to act?

By this time the light of morning had dimmed the light of the night, and I had again gotten myself well poised. I sensed that in time I should feel my physical body as one with the earth beneath me as I was before I unloosed my roots from it for my uptaking.

With this assurance I shook out my branches, lifted up the real of me to meet and mingle with the all-enduring that lay out, within, around and about me.

In the woods, where I came to know many kinds of moving, living things, I found they all had an

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abiding place. So far as I could discern, the greatest interests in their various lives seemed to be centered in the making of these. I rejoiced to find that my kind with their branches and trunks were the foundation on which birds and squirrels built. I was glad of this. It made me sense my worthiness to fill the needs of others.

On the ground beneath me tiny little insects were ever engaged in tasks of their own. I thought much upon their building. They were such tiny, active bits of life. I wondered if they ever ceased from their labor. If their intelligence ever rested. So far as I could see, it never did. If any among them grew weary and dropped by the wayside, some companion removed and cared for it.

All this revealed to me that the life of man was like these, only something just a little higher up in the great scale of life in which all had their place and their part to retain. In what attitude we did this determined our harmony, our spiritual unfoldment or our discords.

I remembered that my lady said: "Turn the limb toward the house." It was into this house they entered after leaving me the first night in my new surroundings. This, then, was their abiding place. Their home, as I learned later to know it. Very carefully I looked it over. Every part of it became dear to me. I knew as I grew older and taller I

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should come closer to it, be able to see the life within it, and by this close contact better understand how to fulfill my obligation of giving.

Just then a beautiful bird came and lit among my leaves. Such a beautiful song as it gave forth. It thrilled me through and through. Every glorious note was an expression of the happiness centered in that delicate body of beauty. I wondered if consciously or unconsciously it was repaying, through its song, the Great Giver who endowed it. Soon the song ceased, and then the sweet call of love rang out. I was sure its mate was near. More calls and then, faint at first, but clearer as she drew near, came the answering note now mingling with its own. Oh, the beauty and the wonder of it all! I felt within myself an active, powerful, vibratory law, a sense of attracting forces. I knew that sometime, somewhere, I, too, must know my mate. The *one note responsive* to the *one within* me. Even as limited as my experience had been, I had learned that completion of self could not be reached alone. That sometime, somewhere, each entity would find its own God-created mate. There were times when illumination of such truths as these almost overpowered me. I was learning that "all things work together for good to those who love Harmony." Past and present experiences were proving to me that my spiritual unfoldment was not of a day.

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That the coming of the night of this physical existence did not end a work that, so far as I could understand, was without beginning and without end.

As the light of morning advanced, greater activities began outside our wall. The glimpses I caught of the streets in the distance became alive with moving beings. Black objects that sped with such force, propelled by what I did not know, were also rushing along humans. I wondered what for? There seemed to be no order, no harmony. What could be the object of it all? What their goal? In the forests the needs of all life around me, so far as I could see, were all provided for. But here it all seemed different. Could these beings be devoid of that something within them that I, only a tree, recognized, harmonized and co-operated with? If so, their lives must be empty and ungladdened by lack of recognition of the real life. Did they trust the ever-present, enveloping Love, who clad the lilies with beauty and marked the sparrow as it fell? To be sure, the little creatures of the woods worked for their sustenance. But they seemed happy at their tasks. Joyous in their work and attuned to the many blessings around them. But how about men? I was not able to answer.

One thing about these abodes of humans that puzzled me was those ugly projections that came

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up through the roofs of their homes. I have learned since to know them as chimneys. I marvelled at them and their use. At times something like a cloud seemed to pour out of them. I learned later that it was smoke. But little did I think that sometime this material body of mine would also float up and out of the home of my lady. Knowing then as little as I did of the great Plan and Purpose of all Life, it was well this fact was hidden from me.

The days and nights slipped by, every one of which held some new wonder, some new joy. New and strange flowers opened their hidden beauties to my sight. I found in them every color that I had learned to love in the glorious sunsets of the sky as they were revealed to me during my life in the midst of the woods. Even here in the rush and roar of human life the Great Artist still brushed the heavens with beauty of color no man could equal. And yet, men either rushed or plodded by with heads down, eyes bent upon the dirt at their feet, and failing to see the glories above them. I tried to shout to them to look up, but they did not heed me.

To me my lady and her mate seemed different from the masses that daily passed their home. As the days grew longer and warmer, the two spent much time in the garden among their flowers and trees. They seemed to note every twig that I put forth and talked about my length of limb, the

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thickness of my trunk, and the size of my various branches. They planned how in another year they could have seats in the midst of me.

It was such a joyous, happy summer. The home open to the breezes, the songs of birds and the music of my leaves. Inside our garden wall there vibrated a love that surpassed any and all I had ever known. It seemed to fill and refill everything within it with perfect harmony. I recognized what seemed to be vitality in all things. Even the stray leaves of the previous year held an appearance of life. Their forms remained, and I could see the fine and delicate veins through which the life sap of the trees had poured. I sensed, and could follow through past experience of my own, every stage of their physical unfoldment up to the time when they fell away from the branches from which they grew. But from lack or need of experience, I did not as yet know how they came to be here in this material form. *Are they a pattern of an already established spiritual body, the real of which I am a counterpart?* Or do all physical entities evolve from the lowest kingdom of nature up and into the highest which I have learned is that of the human and as such represent the three kingdoms beneath them?

I hope this latter is not one of the established facts of nature. I do not want to believe that the human kingdom will alone be represented, no mat-

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ter to what heights of spiritual intelligence or glory it might attain. According to my light of Truth, the four great kingdoms — the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human — do exist in the enduring, eternal and everlasting world of spirituality in the order and individuality by which I know them here, or they would not be here. What would a so-called heaven be without these various gifts the Creator of all has given? If each is enjoyed and needed here in this physical existence, how much more shall all be enriched by them when unfettered by material inharmonies and clothed in the real we shall then know them as they are?

All these questions and many more I could not then answer. Yet within me I felt the assurance that the answer would come sometime, somewhere. That if I would evolve into greater understanding of enduring truths, I must control my physical forces that I might, through my spiritual, conform my intelligence with that of the Great Universal Intelligence. FOR EVOLUTION IS INDIVIDUAL INTELLIGENCE WORKING IN THE RIGHT WAY.

I learned that if I did my best as a tree I was assuming and fulfilling my responsibilities, and therefore Absolute Justice would check off my compensatory score. But if I failed, for lack of humility, to acknowledge the life-giving warmth of the

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sun; if I failed to absorb, take into my being, the rain as it fell upon me or sank beneath the ground that my roots might drink; if I failed to find and make use of the nourishment from the mother earth from whence I made my physical appearances into this realm of larger possibilities, that was needed for my growth and strength, this failure would not retard Justice, absolute and unfailing, in giving me my earned increment according to their values.

You humans who walk the earth on two feet are not the only accountables in this existence of ever-increasing spiritual activity as expressed through physical needs. "Only by pride cometh contention; but with the well advised is wisdom."

If any fail to retain their established harmonic relation with God or the Constructive Principle of nature, they become a discordant note in the Great Plan and Purpose of the universe. However great, however small, each must play his score aright. If I, a tree in my kingdom of vegetation, have proved this as an established fact of nature, how much more should man as a human soul, with his inherent attributes, the primary, fundamental and essential elements of character — "Self-consciousness, independent choice, reason, independent self-consciousness and rational volition" and a vehicle ready to respond to his will, fitted to determine, if

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he so desires, the Truth of all things? Thereby on and on unto Wisdom.

It seemed to me that within man, if not in all forms of life, there were no established barriers between him and God. For there is no time or space unless self-erected. That spiritual unfoldment depended only on acknowledgment of and co-operation with the one Great Giver of all gifts, the one Source of all Life. That if all did this, the gifts that were from the beginning, are now, and always will be, would reveal themselves in kind and manner for the greatest good of all.

Of the rushing mass of humanity that passes under the cooling, sheltering branches of trees, how few ever give us thanks for the beauty and comfort we give. I doubt if many among them all ever give us credit for our willing co-operation with the Great Law of our being. That in so doing we might better help all life, though visioned, forth to physical sense alone. As yet I do not know all the uses man has made of us. I better know the gifts we yield to him under the law of Compensatory Justice.

Even a tree cannot receive and not give. Naturally, in turn, we pay our debts. Some in fruits, some in blossoms, some in nuts, some in gum, others in fuel, shade, shelter, lumber, sugar, rubber, dye-stuffs and turpentine. But above all these, we are

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another object by which love may be called forth. I learned to know this later on, because of my lady.

Up to that time this proved to be the most spiritually illuminating night in my short life. And as the night, so the day. Soon I began to sense an awakening within the home of my lady. It was not long before she came out to me. She looked me over carefully. Listened to the beating of my heart. Tenderly examined my buds and my few opened leaves. And then, calling to her mate, she said: "Dear, the tree is as fresh as before we took it up. It is just animated with life."

How I tried to tell her of the wonder of the night. How I endeavored to tell her that during those hours when most of the world seemed buried, lost to the great truths that were so near, yet hidden from them, that I, a tree, a part of all Life, had touched the outer rim of the whole and was slowly but carefully, through my own demonstration, reaching the center, the essence of all Life.

More and more I was recognizing a great, eternal law. That to know it I must work with it. That to do this I must know myself as a part of it. That I must not dissipate even my physical forces, but use them constructively for my own unfoldment, and so for the good of all Life. This I endeavored to do as the days flew past. Such glorious days! Everyone of which I would like to write about.

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My lady would bring her work and sit beneath my branches. I began to take notice of the things her love was fashioning. Little garments, fine and soft and beautiful. Every touch was one of love. One day she whispered to me the meaning of these dainty things. And, touching my twisted limb, she said: "Here it is we shall swing the cradle, and you, my tree, shall rock my baby to sleep."

"God bless you," I whispered back. "I will sway it so gently and from my strength nourish it and protect it with every fibre of my body. The birds shall sing to it their sweetest songs, and I will shield it from the hot rays of the sun and the cold winds from the north. I will offer up my prayers for the blessings most needed for its unfoldment into such truths as are enduring, eternal, and everlasting."

So this was the use my twisted limb was to fulfill. And I, in my ignorance, had called it ugly. Now I viewed it with thanksgiving. Thankful that it was a part of me.

Nearer and nearer my lady and I grew into better understanding of each other. She greets me in the morning, and from her window near which I stand, and toward which I am growing, she bids me good-night. She tells me that when the snow is on the ground to be patient, it will not be long before I shall again be dressed in blossoms and

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leaves of living green. She places her sweet face upon me and whispers, "I love you." How it thrills me! I bend my branches down and embrace her with the warmth and glory of the best within me. I touch her with my pointed leaves and let them gently sweep across the curtains that cover her eyes like the blue of the arch above.

In moments such as these the real of me burst all material bonds and I see whereas before I was blind. Hear, where before I was deaf. I learn that through touch all my senses open and respond as the petals of a bud to the touch of the sun's rays.

It was in ways like these that the days went by.

The time came when my leaves began to fall to the ground. The nights grew colder. Every morning revealed to me the death of some cherished blossom of the garden. It hurt me to see them blacken, and I so helpless to shield them. Most of the birds had flown away. The doors and windows to the dear home were closed to the cold without.

With all my strength I had directed my branches toward the windows and had succeeded at times, when the winds moved me, in sweeping the glass that shut her from my touch. I was so thankful even for that contact. She never failed to greet me, and the morning after the first snow she exclaimed upon the whiteness of my beauty. |

Again Spring came. Again I felt a new rush of life. A new push up and out. My lady said my tasselled blossoms and new leaves were more beautiful than ever. She wondered to what heights I would grow, and what size I would attain.

As the days grew warmer, she spent her hours near me. What wonderful days those were! Her

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hands had ceased their work. She rested and read and thought. There were times when her thoughts so illumined her face that I suspended every quiver of my being for fear that I might break the perfect harmony of herself, her soul.

Then came a day when I did not see her. People came and went. Her mate did not leave the home. I could see him as he moved from room to room. There seemed to be a hush, a silence I could not understand, and yet beneath it an expectancy, a something looked for.

Then the remembrance of the night of tragedy in the woods came back to me. As then, I did not know if I was to fear or rejoice. I, too, seemed to be waiting — and for what?

Just then a faint cry came to me through the open window which my branch and twigs so persistently had reached. "A son," I heard someone say. Later her mate came and reached out and touched me. I heard him as he thanked God for this new and wonderful blessing. But his ears were deaf to my cry. No one heeded my longing; my constant calling for her.

The time of waiting seemed long before I caught a glimpse of her. She came straight toward me. She, too, reached out and touched me. Brought a tiny branch close to her sweet face and kissed it.

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Then she told me something of the wonder and beauty of the motherhood that now was hers, and of the days she was looking forward to spend with me. She and the child. It was then my harp of many strings played melodies of joy. Joy in the joy of the dear ones here in this home of love and peace.

One day the white-capped nurse brought the little one to the window. Oh, how tiny and frail! Would I ever dare to take it into my sheltering arms? Could I control the strength of my limb, remembering always the precious life within that tiny frame? Yes, I could do all this, and much more. Had I not watched and helped my own growth, my own unfolding? And did I not realize that within that little body, hidden from me, and even the loved blue eyes of the mother, was that same, great, protective, governing, animating Principle? That something that had forced me to move in harmony with it up and through the dark, damp earth into this greater expression of its Love?

Continually I asked: Why all these different expressions of life and His great Love? I did not fully know. But I knew it was for something; that each had its place; that nothing could be misplaced. That in all, and through all, was an intelligence, both Universal and individual. That each of its

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kind was in its way working out its destiny. I had learned that the tree was of a higher grade of understanding than the rock beneath it. That the animal kingdom exhibited more freedom, more intelligence, than I. And that man was, or should be, conscious of God, of self, and other selves. And now it was to be even my privilege, my joy, to watch the unfolding of this human soul here in this tiny body. Could I be a help? Yes. Could I teach it truths? Yes. And through such giving receive what? Greater truths through my willing service of love. Did it pay to know this? Yes. Just how much more I had to endure, live through, and suffer to still *know* — no one could tell me. Only my own experiences could teach me. Absolute Justice would determine my account.

As the days grew longer and warmer my lady and the little one spent many hours under my shade. Her chair, table, and books were there. I was so close to the home that the life within it became my world. Every added inch to length of limb revealed new aspects of the life within. I had learned much about home life from the family life of the birds. I marvelled at the wonderful something that took place within the tiny eggs hidden from the sight of all eyes, even those of the mother bird whose work seemed to be that of guarding and keeping them

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warm. But with all my efforts to fathom the unseen forces, I had to wait until the time came when the living entity, forced by the power of its own growth, through the love of the Architect of all life, picked its own shell, and the breathing, living bird came forth. Here again was manifested, through experience, individual effort, an established fact of nature.

I tried to solve this wonderful phenomenon by close analysis of it and myself. I knew that within that tiny shell "were eyes, but nothing to see; ears, but nothing to hear; lungs, but nothing to breathe." Songs yet unsung; wings yet unfolded. In thought I travelled back to that tiny bit of me hidden beneath the dark earth. How I, too, was compelled by that unknown something within to find the crust of the shell that was confining me to seeming darkness. Impelled to burst my own bonds and break forth into a world of greater possibilities, greater results, and greater freedom. I was at that time such a tiny object, so slight a thing might crush me. I marvelled at the power that kept me erect. Why should I point upward? Was it because of virtue of a higher law in defiance of a lower? Blossoms fell from the bushes near me. And nuts from the trees. What was the attraction? What held each in place?

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Then I looked at myself as I now was — tall, big, strong, and vibrant. Of my bud, blossom, and leaf. The silent, continuous movement of movement. The physical effect that follows Cause. And then, faintly, I began to perceive that these outward demonstrations of me were but *half truths*. That the *real* of me was hidden from my outer sight. That only as I looked within and recognized the ever silent, working force, this law of Continuity, this one Great Law of Attraction wherein all is natural and nothing unnatural, where Love is the ruling power and evolution, intelligence, working in the right way, was the same, yet manifesting through higher rating of vibratory activity. That only as I worked with, and so recognized the truth, could I hope to find the spiritual, the real, enduring, eternal model of which I, the growing physical tree, was a counterpart.

I was learning that spiritual principles do govern physical manifestation. Therefore I assume I am a spiritual entity. And that it is upon this spiritual model I am built. If this is true of me, it is also true of everything organic and inorganic. Everything, then exists as a double entity. Everything has a spiritual basis. Everything exists in spirit. “That every natural flower which grows on earth, implies a flower upon the spiritual side.” If all this is an established fact of nature, I am allowed

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to go on in my process of growth, I questioned, would the time come when I will have outgrown and so be able to throw off my physical shell, show forth the real on which I am fashioned? I could not answer this. Yet I felt that sometime, somewhere, somehow, I should, through my efforts, my experiences, know it as one of the truths that make us all free.

It was a happy day for me when the little hammock swung for the first time from my bent limb holding in its embrace the tiny life so dear to us all.

Every day I found new and wonderful ways to shield and comfort it. If a bit of sunlight seemed too bright, I would protect the baby eyes with my garment of green. If the wind blew too roughly, I would bring my branches closer about it. As the little one grew stronger, I would play hide-and-seek with it, its little hands trying to catch my leaves or the shadow that fell upon them.

One beautiful day when the world within our garden wall was alive with love, my lady and her mate stood one on each side of the swinging cradle looking down at their sleeping son. My lady raised her eyes to those of her mate and said: "Listen, the willow is whispering such beautiful words. Do you hear them, Dear?" Bending her head as if her very soul caught this message, she repeated these lines:

Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!
Here in our love he lies,
Fringed are the blue-veined curtains

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That shadow his deep blue eyes.
In this life a soul new born —
Ours to love through night and morn.
Eyes so dear and tender,
God Divine the sender,
Ours the care to render,
Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!

Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!
Earth's temple holds a soul
Through God to ever live
As ages eternal roll.
Here for an earthly duty —
Led by Light, Truth and Beauty,
Soul fed for its growing
From Truth ever flowing —
Is ours for such knowing.
Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!

Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!
Love casteth out all fear.
Strong is the heavenly band
That guardeth his mortal ear.
In eternal laws there's rest,
Our Father knowest best.
Ear to catch His favor
Through our Lord and Saviour.
Ours the earthly treasure.
Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!

Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!
His hands, so tender yet strong,
May they in loving service
Uplift life's struggling throng.
Know within all power lie,
Life forever, not one can die!
Hands to express God's freedom
Here in his own kingdom
All through love and wisdom.
Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!

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Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!
Here in the earthly fold.
His lips have yet to utter
The story so often told.
In his soul are thoughts unsaid,
Pure from Heaven's fountain fed,
Lips to praise God ever,
None from Him can sever;
Both as one forever.
Baby sleeps! Baby sleeps!

The hand of the father clasped that of the mother. As they stood there, a feather from the robin's nest above fell upon the two hands. As they lifted their gaze upward, the bright eyes of the mother-bird, looking over the nest that held her feathered flock, flashed a recognition of the ever-eternal truth of Love made manifest to her through her little ones and the constant vigilance and protective love of her bird mate. I shook my branches in harmony with this drama of life. My lady understood my outpourings of joy, for I heard her say: "And its leaves are for the healing of the nations."

How fast the Summer days flew past! Filled as they were with the ever-present experiences of the life about me and that of these three made one through the harmony of God knowledge. Bits of verse that my lady would read aloud gave me much knowledge by which to obtain truths. I learned to value and better appreciate the spiritual knowledge that flowed from the minds of the poets she loved.

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These helped to give me a clearer vision of the reality of all things. A deeper understanding of the unity between the two kingdoms, the spiritual and the physical. The day came when my Light of Truth partially revealed to me:

“And verily many thinkers of their age,
Aye, many Christian teachers, half in heaven,
Are wrong in just my sense, who understood
Our natural world too insulary, as if
No spiritual counterpart completed it.
Consummating its meaning, rounding all to justice and
perfection, line by line,
Form by form, nothing single nor alone,
The great below clenched by the great above.”

Thank God for such as you, I whispered, as I gently touched my lady with my leaves. Through the grace of God you have been as a lamp unto my feet. Before, I saw as through a glass darkly, but now face to face, line by line, form by form, nothing single nor alone. “The great below clenched by the great above.”

Now, as never before, I realized that completion of self, even that of a tree, could not be reached “single nor alone.” That, if not here, then “clenched by the great above,” I should, sometime, come face to face with my own mate. And this through God’s love, the harmony within me, I should obtain self-completion. Also, through my

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compliance to duty, an obligation placed upon me by Him, I would evolve up to the highest expression in the kingdom of which I am a member. To what further *end* and *use* I did not know.

I had to learn there were qualities within myself that I had not met and uncovered. Depths that had not been sounded. Experiences that had not revealed them. Once when the little one had been ill for a few days I sensed an anxiety never felt before. I did not know its meaning. I could not find its cause. One day my lady read aloud from a book that was always her constant companion: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil." I could understand how death might be likened unto a shadow, but only as a shadow, for it takes the Light of Truth to produce the earthly reflection. But what was the meaning of: "I will fear no evil"? What was evil? If it was something not good, from whence did it come? Who or what was the discordant note? From out of harmony, how could discord come? These and many other problems I was trying to adjust to my understanding when my attention was directed to confusion and pain in the street just outside our wall.

In an instant my whole body seemed a thing aside from myself. The very real of me seemed changed. Instantly I felt an uprising of some

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demon within me. The love, beauty and harmony that I had, up to this time, expressed through was thrust aside, and I feared myself, my strength, and my power. I reached out with all the force of my being to strike with my many branches the man who was using his strength upon the poor horse that lay within his power. Could I have reached him, my limbs would have hurled and crushed him to the earth. I beat my branches upon the window and my calls for my lady were answered. No fear in her for the wrath of man. Her condemnation made him cover his eyes for shame of the manhood he had lost. She pointed out to him the cause why the poor beast was not equal to his burden. She picked up one of the horse's hoofs and there, caught in the shoe, was a stone that prevented his progress.

Ashamed and humbled, the man threw his stick aside, and thank the powers that be, he forgot himself and remembered the horse. The horse forgot his wrongs, and remembered only the man. He put his soft nose against the rough face of the human who had unmercifully flogged him. For a moment the love within the heart of both glowed forth with the radiance of the God within. I believe an understanding was then established between them that never will be overlooked. My lady hid a sob in her voice and the tears in her eyes as she touched and spoke to me on her way to the house. But the

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awakening of anger within me made me tremble in all my limbs. I felt that every one of my twigs and leaves were wilted. I had experienced such a frightful change! I had learned for the first time the meaning of hate and the fire that burneth. The songs of the birds were hushed. Even the light of the sun was hidden. I prayed that never again should I behold a demonstration of the wrong side of the duality of human motives and desires.

The Summer and Autumn were gone, and again my limbs became naked and my heart filled with loneliness. The life within the house seemed shut away. The daily contacts were gone. The outside home life under my branches had moved within and I seemed shut without. But my interest never ceased in the dear home life made visible to me through the many windows which I now had reached. The growth of the little fellow filled me with wonder. The time came when he drew himself up to his full height and waved his tiny hand in welcome to me. Then came the event of his first step. How glad I was that the father was there to witness it. That it took place at the going to bed time of the little one. Never will I forget the dear home picture reflected by the happiness on the faces of the three.

The Winter wore away and soon the beautiful May days brought out the home life to me more

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and more. Toward the close of one particular day, the very atmosphere seemed filled with expectation. My lady and the little one expressed great excitement. New things began to happen under my branches. A small, round table was brought out decorated with beautiful flowers. Later on a cake with one small candle was placed in its center. The high-chair tied with pink ribbons brought a shout of joy from the baby. My lady caught him close to her heart, and I heard her say: "I thank Thee, God, for the blessing this one little year of his life has meant to us."

How can I record what followed? How did I live knowing the anguish of the soul so close to me, yet unable to help her? I realized as never before my seemingly limited faculty to help, comfort and love her then when she needed me most in the time of her sudden widowhood. I tried to focus that throbbing, vibrant God - power outside, above, around, and within, and yet greater than I, upon her and her needs. I called upon all the different manifestations of life around me to aid and strengthen her. To me all was animate. Even the stones in their kingdom below me were filled with life up to their degree and quality of intelligence. I had learned our dependence upon the one Great Source of the life of all. For "As the branch cannot

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bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me."

The world of humans seems to fail in their praise of the ministry of the world of all three kingdoms beneath them. Nature never ceases in her offerings. In secret our greatest gifts are given. Oh, how I prayed for strength to bestow upon her, my lady, "the peace that passeth all understanding."

Past the baby chair trimmed with the ribbon of pink, the cake bearing the tiny emblem of the one year of baby life, kind friends carried the body of the father and her mate. Three days the house was stilled. During that last hour, before they brought him forth, I caught these words: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it *were* not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am *there* ye may be also." How the words, "I go to prepare a place for you," filled and strengthened me.

As they bore his body out and under my branches I dropped my "leaves of healing" upon my lady, and thanked the Father of us all for my Light of Truth, my understanding of Him.

Such a void of happiness as prevailed in our garden through all those Summer days. Even the baby voice held a shadow of pain. My lady tried to find her all in the life of the little one. But I knew that

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could not be. The child was of her, yet a thing apart. But her mate was one with her. Had been and always would be the one half that made the completion of the one. How she strove in spirit to retain and hold onto that truth. How she prayed for strength to live the life that the vision might not be clouded, that the real might not be hidden.

My lady's spiritual insight was glimpsing all this, for she at times looked beyond and saw that "He whose correspondence was with this world *alone* was only a thousandth part, a fraction, the mere rim and shade of an environment, and only the fraction of a life." I tried to tell her that all we see with our physical vision is such a tiny part of the great whole found in God's eternal plan and purpose. But ours to know when we, in humility, are willing to walk hand in hand with Him through the open door of wisdom, and know, through personal effort, "There is no death. There are no dead." Many ask what is death? One writer has said: "Death is one of the outstanding things in Nature which has an acknowledged spiritual equivalent."

You ask me, Dear, with lifted eyes,
Now filled with wonder and surprise,
To tell you what Death's meaning is,
And when I answer, "What is life?"
You lightly laugh and turn away;
Then, sadder grown, come back and say:
"My Love, I do not know."

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From my experience I have had evidence that birth, or so-called life, and death, the so-called opposite, are one and the same. But by whatever name the Animating Principle may be called, it surely is Universal and individual intelligence. Universal Intelligence never ceases to act.

But what part of the circle of life individual intelligence first operated on, if there was a first, I do not know. But wherever or whatever its degree and quality of understanding may be, impelled by a Greater Intelligence than its own it steadily advances if the moral law, the established harmonic relation which it bears to God, or Universal Intelligence, is sustained.

If so, there comes a time when such efforts shadow forth the exact goal each is striving to attain. "There is a spiritual body and there is a terrestrial body." A time comes when the soul outgrows forever the physical instrument that houses it.

And there are times, temporarily, when the ego can leave the material body and travel forth in that of its ethereal.

Even I have earned the right to say that the individual, governing, animating principle, when sustained by Absolute Justice, or God, is master of either instrument through which it desires to express. I, through my right motives and desires for those truths that are eternal, enduring and ever-

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lasting, have been able by their light to rise above these physical bonds. At such times I, in spirit, go to my lady. And now when her grief has burned me under the consciousness of her present saddened condition, I try to make her realize the love and hope I am trying to express.

I tell her that my leaves, *my lights of Truth*, are for "the healing of the nations." I whisper to her that the constant, ever-present power of the love of her mate is here. That he is nearer to her than when clothed by the physical.

That aside from God's love, he, your Beloved, is your greatest gift. That *a real gift, once personally earned, can never be taken away*. For, in very truth, it is an abiding part of both the giver and the receiver.

My lady looked at me and yet saw me not. She, *herself*, her soul through her finer spiritual perceptions, saw only her own. Thus it is that through the inter-penetration of the great universality we come to better understand the heart-throb of all life through our right efforts to know the one Creator.

As the days came and went, the healing presence of Divine Love, through "her living of the life," built up her spirit, and I saw it shine forth through the thin mask of flesh brighter and stronger as she evolved through her experiences. I felt sure the

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life of earth would be brief for her. That the culmination of her efforts would be as a never-ending ray of light. The light of Truth, which alone, during her transition, would protect her against all darkness, all fear. That her pathway would so shine unto her dear one that his radiance mingling with hers would reveal such love as would continue in its unfolding "unto the perfect day."

As time went on, the little one spent much time among my branches. I was his play-house. The birds were his baby friends. His mother his almost constant companion. His Teddy Bear the baby of his love. As the Summer advanced, the seats among my branches became more and more his home. He and Teddy ate there. Hidden by my many leaves, they had their daily naps curled in the safe embrace of my many limbs.

Again Winter came and went. Again the birthday of the little one dawned. I wondered if two lighted candles would glow in place of the one unlighted a year ago. Could this day be met in the spirit of thanksgiving? Did she still keep the vision open? The pathway clear that reached from them to him? Did she sense the ever-present life of his soul made one with hers? These questions I asked myself as the sun cleared the mists of the night away.

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As the day advanced, my lady followed the little one out to me. She went with him into the very midst of my branches, took the dear baby form close to her heart, and told him the story of his short baby life. How, through God's mercy, the presence of her little one had blessed and sustained her, made her strong through her loving service to him. How she would continue to ask that she might be given strength to fulfill her obligations. The little one looked at her as though the soul of him saw far beyond the confines of his baby form. For a moment I, in spirit, came so close to these two that we three, mingling our inherent forces, made us one. Every string in my harp of many strings played in perfect harmony, and I sensed as never before the coming unity of spirit through the near dissolution or change of that which was purely physical. I felt impressed that the time was near when we three should show forth as we in reality were, and not as we seemed.

I heard her say: "Little son, you shall have your birthday party. You and Teddy and mother will bring out the little table here under the willow, and we will trim it with flowers, and in the center of it we will put your birthday cake with two little pink candles for you to light." How my lady strove to forget the sad moments of the past in the gladness of the day. How she later on thanked God for her

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willing trust and faith in His ever-present goodness.

As time went on, by ways and means unknown to me, I sensed a new anxiety that was creeping into her life. A something that has come since her mate went. Were their needs all met? I could not tell.

Again we were called upon to meet another sad event in these never-ceaseless, active experiences of life as we know them here. During the latter part of the beautiful October days the little one began to show signs of great weariness.

One day, with Teddy tucked under his arm, he slowly climbed up and onto one of my seats. I heard him say: "I'se so tired, Teddy, I can't hold you. And you's tired, too. You go to sleep, now, Teddy, dear." And reaching over, he put his beloved Teddy into a deep hollow in my bent limb. I am sure my lady did not know of this resting-place. The baby kissed and petted Teddy and seemed to be bidding it a drowsy good-by as his dear baby head fell forward on my limb that had so often held and lulled him to sleep.

When my lady called he did not answer. When she reached him the beautiful eyes remained closed, and his breathing seemed painful. Oh, the stillness of the days that followed! Once only I heard his voice when he murmured: "Mama, Teddy is tired, too. Teddy is in his own little bed, asleep. Will he tome to me? "

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Not long after this, beautiful white flowers that gently swayed by the breeze swept the door from which they hung. I cannot write of this. My heart is too full of the misery of my lady. I could only drop my leaves of healing upon them as they passed beneath me. When she came back I felt that both her dear ones, though unseen by her, walked by her side and held her for a moment beneath my healing leaves. I cannot write of the Winter, Spring and Summer that followed.

One night, when the air was bitter with the north winds, my lady came out through the loneliness and darkness to me. She clasped her arms about me and, laying her beloved face down upon me, sobbed out her anguish, grief and loneliness of soul. She told me that I, too, must be taken from her. That she must sell the land on which I stood, that she might keep her home.

She told me how weak she was. How her body failed to respond to her will to do. Could she endure to live and see me cut down, knowing that before another night had come I would be lying with limbs severed from my body, a mass of broken parts on the ground that nourished me and from whence, so far as I knew, I came? "Can I," she cried, "live on alone?" Everything she loved best taken from her? What a night that was! I closed my protective branches about her and softly, as a

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mother whispers to her tired child, I told her how I, a tree, heard and held in my memory my first note of awakening. How I learned that I was a member of the great symphony of life. That my part well played was even essential to the whole. That the ear attuned, through truth, would perceive my slightest discord. That it was my duty, an obligation placed upon me by the Great Source of all Life, to keep in harmony with it. That my spiritual growth, my unfoldment, depended upon how and in what attitude of spirit I met and lived the experiences that constitute the exact knowledge of every entity in whichever kingdom of nature they manifest through. I tried to tell her that insofar as this co-operation with God was sustained, to that extent one's Light of Truth, understanding of God, increased. I told her not to grieve at my going; to remember my uptaking and my replanting here. How at that time my very being was held for a moment in the bondage of fear. Fear of what the future held for me. But only for a moment, for by the light of past experiences I again trusted that Great Power I recognized and obeyed. And what was the result? Had it profited me? Yes. For through these experiences I knew that I must "keep on going on." That these "flowing conditions" were necessary that God's Plan and Purpose be fulfilled. That all in time would, I felt sure, be for

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the good of all. That her dear ones were not dead, but, I felt sure, more alive than when here.

My lady left me, more peaceful than when she came.

I hope I helped to increase her understanding of the one Great Light.

The morning of my execution rose clear and cold. Some time after the noon hour, two men with axes clean cut and sharp approached me. They seemed to take no thought of my lady or the pain they were to inflict upon her. As for me, I was nothing but a tree. I meant nothing to them. I was only an encumbrance, a something to be gotten rid of. The seats that my lady's mate had nailed between my branches were wrenched out without a thought of the love which placed them there. I began to sense again that feeling of hate that overpowered me when the brute man struck the so-called beast who looked at him with eyes of understanding and pity. Then it was that I, too, prayed for toleration of man and perfect belief and trust in God.

As the axes cut deeper and deeper into my body, I looked again and ever again into the home made so dear to me. There in the center of the room, seemingly alone, stood my beloved lady. Her head was raised as if in prayer. I knew that she, too, was asking for strength and courage. I asked that she might not hear me when I fell. That I might

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carry with me for all eternity the memory of the transfiguration that glowed, as with some unseen power, in and about her.

I felt myself quiver. A sense of falling filled my whole being with the ever-present desire, knowledge and need of the abiding love of God. I knew that He was there, for a strength outside, yet within myself, supported and encouraged me. One more bite of the axe, and I crashed to the earth. But what of this *new birth, this continuity or uninterrupted connection of unbroken life? This vibrant, living, breathing entity revealed to me by the cutting off of my physical counterpart? Here I was, exactly where I formerly stood. But more radiant, more alive than before.*

Again, but with a clearer vision, I looked within the room that I had just a moment before viewed, as I supposed, for the last time. Then through *spiritual vision* I saw the face of her so dear to me. It was the same, and yet changed. Now I saw her as she really was. The real, enduring body spiritual and the soul shining through as never seen by me before. Then I understood the meaning of the change that had come to me "in the twinkling of an eye." I was still "the tree of life" and, thank God, my leaves were for the healing of the nations.

I understood that the complete throwing aside or the laying down of the physical had not changed

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me, the individual animating entity. I was the same as before, *plus this new experience called Death, and re-clothed in my enduring, eternal and everlasting body spiritual*. Knowing this, I had faith to believe that sometime she, too, with vision unclouded, would see her loved ones.

How I wished that she might behold them as they appeared now to my unfolded sight. The mate of the robin who was left alone, still clinging to my broken branches, was crying for the more vibrant, living bird who was singing in my real, my spiritual branches. Singing to her of the wonderful, beautiful country which is the beginning of the *real life*. That he was there and awaiting her.

After dark, my lady crept out to the broken parts of me that lay bleeding at her feet. With all my efforts I could not open her spiritual sight to the reality of my actual being. She touched me with a touch made sacred by her love. I heard her say: "I must find the limb from which my baby swung. It must not be cut or burned."

As she stooped to pull it out from under my many branches, a sob shook her. For there, hidden in the hollow of my bent limb, was her baby's Teddy Bear, just as the little one had left him.

In memory again I heard his dear voice say: "I'se tired, Teddy, and so is 'oo. You must go to sleep."

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“God’s mercy endureth forever,” I whispered, and seeing what I did, I quickly added: “And my leaves are for the healing of the nations.” For there, in the crook of one of Teddy’s arms, was a bird’s nest. The finding of this tiny home in the loving embrace of Teddy brought comfort to the aching heart of my lady. Sitting there, apparently alone, but not alone, on one of my broken branches, with the toy of her baby clasped in her arms, I and the dear ones heard her communing with the ever-present help of all in times of trouble. She asked for comfort and aid in this time of her great need. With hands that treembled as she touched me, she told me how she would have to burn me to keep her warm. How it would hurt her to be the one to do this. To know that through her hands, stick by stick, I would entirely leave her.

I tried to tell her that substance existed only spiritually. That matter was universal property, acted upon by intelligence to represent some idea and body forth God’s created things for some purpose known to Him. But she was blind and deaf to the spiritual. Blind to that which interpenetrated the physical, which seemed to be the real. Tenderly taking my twisted limb, she left me, dragging it slowly toward the house.

Near the close of the Winter her strength grew less. From my place outside, I watched her physi-

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cal drop away. The spiritual body lighted by the soul within glowed through and dimmed the feeble materiality without.

Then came a night when loving hearts and tender hands soothed and comforted her. I heard some friend say, as she placed a bit of me on the fire: "This is the last stick from the tree she loved so well."

I, who watched from without, and from within, was glad of this. Glad, too, of the presence of her loved ones. Never once did they fail to be near her. Oh, the love and longing their faces expressed as they waited her coming. Neither did I, the real tree, cease to be ready to wave her a welcome when her physical flame had burned out to the very socket of her materiality. Sparks from my old body flew faster and faster up and out of the chimney where, in the days gone by, I had wondered if I should go.

How well I timed my complete physical exit with that of hers. I, the living tree, heard the friends say: "Her breath is growing shorter." I said: "So is mine — that part, if any, that still remains in my broken instrument."

I looked within the room that would hold her only for a moment longer. The spiritual body was releasing itself from the terrestrial. The arms of her loved ones were stretched to take her. With a cry of joy, the last spark from my earthly tree flew

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up and out into the great whole from whence they came. But I, quivering with life and love, was also waiting to greet her.

For the first time since the great change came to me did I feel free. Up to now I had felt an attraction to my physical body because of its need to her. But now we were both free from earthly conditions. Whereas before she saw as through a glass darkly, but now face to face with the loved ones and me, there in this condition of *enduring life, in the city eternal in the heavens*. For “*In the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life. . . . And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*”

“*Beloved are they that do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates to the city.*”

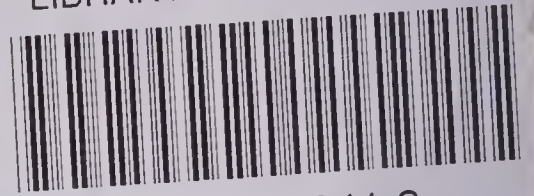
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